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Participants at a national Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) exhibition don vocational enterprise props at the USAID booth. Photo credit: Steve Nelson/USAID

KENYA

USAID EMPOWERED YOUTH

Young people in Kenya face high unemployment, limited social and economic opportunities, and major challenges to their overall well-being. Youth, especially marginalized adolescent girls, lack agency and empowerment, further contributing to their feeling vulnerable and left behind. The USAID Empowered Youth activity addresses those challenges by supporting innovative and sustainable strategies, partnerships, and youth-led approaches to improving youth economic prospects, increasing access and use of social and economic services, and connecting youth with each other.

The activity supports a case management approach to reducing chronic vulnerability among marginalized youth and actively seeks to strengthen linkages between US and Kenyan universities, TVET institutions, the private sector, and local government to better align technical and vocational education and training to complementary investments, employment opportunities, and entrepreneurship resources. To accelerate youth-driven employment solutions, Empowered Youth provides small grants to start or expand youth-led businesses, scale youth-run enterprises to employ more youth, or expand employer-led training.

OUR WORK

The USAID Empowered Youth activity is working to improve the lives of youth 18-24 years old and the most vulnerable adolescent girls 15-19 years old. It will expand and strengthen formal networks between county governments, private sector partners, higher education institutions, and youth networks in up to 26 counties by continuously co-creating opportunities for youth to gain skills, develop youth-led enterprises, and increase employment prospects for youth. The five-year project prioritizes elevating youth as development partners at local, county, and national levels so that

youth-serving systems will be transformed, and successful activities sustained beyond the life of the USAID-funded award.

OBJECTIVES

- **Increase the economic prospects of Kenyan youth** by connecting them with demand-driven training in targeted sectors with high growth potential. Ensure youth have access to essential life skills and entrepreneurship training, alongside access to finance and expanding opportunities for youth-led and youth-friendly businesses. Connect marginalized adolescent girls and their families with comprehensive support and services through a case management approach that will reduce their chronic vulnerability and increase their economic and social prospects.
- **Build the capacity of Kenyan higher education institutions** along high growth value chains to increase workforce competitiveness, conduct research, and increase the use of reliable data to inform youth development training, policy, and investments. Enhance the effectiveness and quality of technical vocational training, establish pathways from technical vocational training to university level programs, and better align training to employer needs.
- **Strengthen youth-serving systems** to impact the lives of youth measurably and sustainably. Expand and strengthen youth networks (including youth *bunges*, YALI alumni, and other youth organizations) that can serve as a vital resource for engaging, empowering, and connecting youth.

BUDGET: USD \$15 million

DURATION

2021 - 2025

ACTIVITY LOCATIONS

6 high-touch counties (Isiolo, Kakamega, Kiambu, Kisumu, Mombasa, and Nakuru)

IMPLEMENTING PARTNER

Michigan State University College of Education

KEY PARTNERS

CLUSA International
Egerton University
National Youth Bunge Association
United States International University-Africa

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